

WHAT HINDERS MEN FROM COMING TO CHRIST

JOHN 5:40 • TV123B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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John 5:40

“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

Here’s our text today; it is found in **John the 5th chapter verse 40**. I know that you are familiar with this Scripture; you have heard it many, many, times but let me read it again.

Our Lord said, *“And you will not come to me that you might have life.”* What hinders a man from coming to Christ?

Our Lord gives a full and free and gracious invitation to every guilty sinner. He says, *“Come, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him.”*

There’s no sin too great, there’s no past too black that our Lord can’t put that sin away and make it as white as snow. But, men will not come.

Our Lord gives a full and free and gracious invitation to every weary sinner. He said, *“Are you weary, heavy laden (burdened with the load of guilt of sin)? Come to me and I will give you rest, come to me.”*

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Our Lord gives a full and free invitation to every thirsty sinner. He said, *“Ho everyone, (attention everyone) that is thirsty, come to the water. Don’t bring any money. Come and buy wine and milk without money, without price.”*

“Why do you labor for that which is not bread? Why do you spend your money for that which satisfieth not?” Come to Christ, come and receive it all free. *“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled.”* Christ said, “Come on, but men will not come.”

Our Lord says to every lost sinner, *“the Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost.”* To every ungodly soul He says: *“Christ died for the ungodly.”* To every sinner, *God commended his love toward us that while we were yet sinners; Christ died for us.”*

So, it’s a full and free and gracious invitation that the Master extends to every sinner and He says: *“whosoever will; let him take the water of life. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* but men will not call; they will not come to Christ the Lord.

Now, they will come to a program of religion. It surprises me; I said to my wife the other day when we were watching one of these religious programs on the television that keeps begging and begging and selling and selling and promoting gimmick after gimmick.

I said: “I don’t know why I’m surprised; I see this all the time and they are supported by the millions.” They talk about 57 and 60 million dollars a year supplied by people all over the nation to preach a gospel and they are not even preaching the Gospel.

I never hear them preaching the Gospel; there’s no Gospel preached. I hear them singing and giving things away and selling things and introducing new gimmicks but I don’t hear any Gospel being preached and yet people support it.

Do you know why? It’s because people will come to a religious program. They will come to a religious organization but they will not come to Christ.

You can organize any kind of religious opportunity or organization today and you will get some folks to follow you like this Jim Jones that led almost 1,000 people to their suicidal death because of gimmicks and promotion, but men will not come to Christ.

They will come to a system of morals. They will come to a law. You can start making rules for people to live by and rules for people to abide by and sacrifices for people to make.

You can have them take their shoes off and walk 50 miles every morning before breakfast in order to go to heaven and there will be some folks try it but they will not come to Christ.

You can organize religion where they have a dress code, people have to wear certain kinds of clothes, they have to have a certain kind of diet, they have to belong to a certain denomination and you will get multitudes to follow you.

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And, they will come to the front of a church. You can stand before a congregation and plead for them to come to the front, come to the altar, come to the preacher, come to the preacher's hand, come to the prayer closet, and come to the place of inquiry, the inquiry room.

They will come to those places, to those programs, to those organizations, to those foolish endeavors, but they will not come to Christ. That's what our Lord said; that's what He accused them of.

He talked to these Pharisees. They had their traditions, they had their days, they had their Sabbaths, and they had their Holy Days. One of them said: *"I fast twice a week, I pray, I give alms. I'm not an adulterer, I'm not an unjust man; I'm not like that publican:*

"I wear my robes of religion. I teach in the synagogues." Christ said: *"You will not come to me that you might have life."* There's no life in the law, there's no life in religion, there's no life in organization, there's no life in tradition, there's no life in dress codes, diets, and denomination.

Life is in Christ. He's the life, but men will not come to Christ, no matter how clear the note sounded in the Scriptures, no matter how clear the note is sounded, regarding Jesus Christ. He says: *"I'm the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me, but you will not come to me; let another come in his own name and him ye will receive. I come in my Father's name and you will not come to me."*

He said, *"I'm the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved and go in and out in find pasture,"* but men will not come to Christ.

Christ said: *"I'm the resurrection and the life. No other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid, Christ the Lord. There's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."*

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son of God, (whatever he believes, whatever he does, whoever he follows), shall never see life." That's what your Bible and that's what this Bible and that's what every Bible says.

And yet, in the face of overwhelming facts, overwhelming evidence, Christ said, *"the works that I do bear witness of me. The Father bore witness of me. John the Baptist bore witness of me and you search the scriptures because in them you think you have life but they are they which testify of me and you will not come to me that you might have life."*

In the face of overwhelming Scripture and overwhelming evidence concerning life only in Christ, men will not come to Christ. They will come to anything else, anyone else, or any other program.

Give them something to do, something to give, somewhere to go, some Mecca to visit, some Holy Land to visit, some shrine to visit. Give them some beads to count, give them some

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bendings and bowings to accomplish, some programs to support, money to send in, and they will do anything but they will not freely, graciously and willingly, come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You can sell salvation but you can't give it away. Man's in the mood to buy salvation by his works and deeds. He's not in the mood to take it from the hand of Christ as a beggar by the mercy of God.

What's wrong with him? What hinders a man from coming to Christ? I will give you five reasons and it will sum up everybody listening to this program and the fellow preaching it too by nature.

There are five reasons why men do not come to Christ. There are five things that hinder men from coming to Christ:

First of all: The human will!

Christ said; *"You will not, you will not come to me."* The first problem is the human will. Now men may talk, (now listen to me, I wouldn't offend you; I'm trying to tell you the truth) men may talk of the human will being free but the human will is not free, it's enslaved.

The human will is not free, it's in slavery to sin; it's in bondage to sin. It's been in bondage since the fall in the Garden of Eden. The human will is in bondage to sin. It's a servant and a slave of sin.

You have no power over what you think, the evil that you think; it comes without any promotion. The Scripture says in **Romans 8:7**: *"The carnal mind (natural mind, that's the human mind), is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither in deed, can it be."*

You try to exercise some control over your mind, and your thoughts, and your dreams and in your imagination; you are in for a shock; your will's in bondage to your evil nature. Listen to **Jeremiah 13:23**:

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Can the leopard change his spots?" Then, when that happens, when an Ethiopian, by his will, can become another color, and when a leopard (by his will) can do away with his spots, *"then can you do good (that are accustomed, that are trained), that are taught to do evil."*

The great preacher Martin Luther wrote a whole book on the Bondage of the Human Will. The human will is in bondage. You don't have to teach your children to lie; they are born knowing how to lie. They are born exercising that will to lie.

You don't have to teach them to hate. They are born knowing how to hate. You don't have to teach them to covet. You don't have to teach them to be selfish; they are born knowing how to be selfish.

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You have to teach them how to love and how to be gracious. Do you see that, because the human will is in bondage; it's not free; it's not free at all. It can't do one thing in its own power. "*You will not, (that's your trouble) you will not come to me,*" Christ said. You don't will to come.

But, I am glad for a good note in **Psalm 110**: "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" God can make a man willing. The Holy Spirit can make a man willing. If a man is willing, the Holy Spirit made him willing.

"It's not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy. And we are born, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man; we are born of God."

The reason men do not come to Christ, what hinders a man from coming to Christ, is first, their will. Sure, salvation is free, but you will not take it. Sure, the gift of God is eternal life, but you will not receive it.

Sure, Christ welcomes every penitent sinner, but you are not penitent; you will not bend, bow, surrender, you will not. Our hearts are stubborn and our will's in bondage and our minds and necks are stiff against God.

Second: Men not only are not willing but they love the world, they flat love this world!

John 3:19 says: "*This is condemnation; light is come into this world.*" Light has come and life has come, truth has come, and Christ has come.

Did men love Him? Look outside the city of Jerusalem and you will find out how much they loved Him. They nailed him to a cross between two thieves. That's how much they love truth.

Somebody said: "Oh, if holiness would just come embodied into this world men would love him." Holiness came embodied into this world. Love came embodied into this world. Christ the Lord of glory came into this world and they spat upon Him and hit Him with the opened palm and plucked out His beard and lied on Him and nailed him to a cross and put a guard up in front of His tomb.

Oh how they hate holiness. "*This is condemnation; light has come into this world but men love darkness.*" That's why they won't come to Christ. That's what hinders them from coming to Christ; "*they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.*"

"*A man can't serve two masters. He can't serve God and mammon;*" he can't do it. A man cannot love Christ and love this world; he's got to make a choice and all men by nature make that choice, "*Give us Barabbas.*" That's the choice.

"*I have two here and it's a custom to release unto you, one this day. To whom or which one shall I release unto you, Jesus or Barabbas?*" With one accord, the natural man, religious men,

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infidels, agnostics, skeptics, atheists, denominational people, everybody with one accord said, *“we will take Barabbas.”*

That’s man’s nature; that’s what hinders him from coming to Christ. A man cannot walk with God and walk with the enemies of God; it can’t be done.

This is why our Lord’s invitations are always carefully worded. You listen to this; you listen to the invitations of our Lord, he said:

“If any man come to me; let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” There’s a choice to be made. *“If any man love his mother, father, brother, sister, even his own life more than me, he cannot be my disciple.”* There’s a choice to be made.

“If a man puts his hand to the plow and turns and looks back he’s not fit for the kingdom of God.” There’s a choice to be made.

The prophet of God stood one day and said: *“choose you this day whom you will serve, either the gods on the other side of the Jordan, the gods of the heathen, or the Lord God of glory.”* There’s a choice to be made.

What hinders man from coming to Christ? That’s his choice, darkness, the world, materialism, self-love, fame, and the praise of men: *“they seek not the honor that comes from God; they seek the honor that comes from this world.”*

It is sold out for a mess of pottage. They have sold out for 30 pieces of silver. What are you selling it for? What are you selling Christ for? How much are you getting for your soul? How much are you getting in exchange for eternal life? How much are you getting in exchange?

It’s not worth it. *“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”* They don’t come to Christ because they love the world and you can’t love both because Christ and this world are as opposite as east and west, infinitely separated. You’ve got to make a choice.

Third: Men do not come to Christ because they are wrapped up in the traditions of religion!

Everybody today is religious. Somebody told me the other day that 53% of the citizens of the United States were born again. I don’t believe a word of it.

Our Lord took 12 men and shook the world. What would we do with 110 million Americans? There are 110 million church members in this country. There are 110 million people wrapped up in religion in this country.

There are 110 million people who are following the traditions of religion in this country but there are not 110 million people who come to Christ, whose life is Christ, whose love is Christ, whose

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way is Christ, whose hearts beat with the love for Christ, whose minds throb with the thoughts of Christ, whose souls are committed to the laws and commandments of Christ. No sir!

I will tell you this, the best place to hide from Christ and the Gospel of His grace is in a church; that's the best place to hide, and that's the best refuge to protect you from the truth, hide in the church.

The most difficult person to reach with the true Gospel of substitution and saving grace is a church member. The True Gospel, what are we, who Christ is, what He did, why did He do it, and where He is now. The most difficult person to reach is a church member.

What is faith, what is repentance? What is eternal life? The hardest person to reach with those vital issues is a man in religion, a man in a pulpit or in a pew because he's wrapped up in the traditions of religion.

He's been confirmed, he's been sprinkled, and he's been baptized. He's a Baptist or a Methodist or a Catholic or a Presbyterian. He has his customs, his tradition, and his special day.

He has his righteousness. He's not a sinner and he does not need a Savior. He's not lost and he does not need finding. He's not guilty and he does not need grace.

He's not corrupt and he does not need mercy. And like the Israelites of old, he boasts that God is his Father and Christ said: *"you don't even know God."*

Men are hiding in false professions and false refuges. They say: *"We've made a covenant with death and with hell are we in agreement. When the scourge of God's wrath shall come through it won't touch us; we have a refuge."*

That brings me to the fourth reason why men do not come to Christ, what hinders men from coming to Christ:

Fourth: They have already come to a profession of faith; they've already come to a religious refuge; they've already come to an experience of religion.

They say this: "I know I'm saved. Now; I made a profession of faith years ago and I accepted Jesus and I'm saved. I have no prayer life, I have no love for the Scriptures, and I have no regular worship habits."

"I have no grace in my heart, I have no forgiving spirit, and I have no real love for God and His Word and His people. I show no genuine growth in Christ Jesus but you can't tell me I'm not saved because I was there when it happened."

That's a good refuge in which to hide from God and to hide from the conviction of the Holy Spirit, to hide from the Gospel that is able to set you free and to hide from the truth of Jesus Christ that is able to make you a new creature.

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I was preaching on the radio one time and a friend of mine listened regularly. He was an insurance man who walked a debit route and he was walking his debit route one day and he stopped in a house and knocked on the door to collect.

The lady came to the door and he said: "I would like to invite you to church." She said: "I already go to church." He said, "Well, why don't you listen to my pastor preach; he's on the radio every morning at 8:30." She said: "Well, I would be glad to."

So, he was gone for a month and came back by a month later and knocked on the door and she came to the door. While he was collecting he said: "Say, have you heard my pastor?" She said, "I did several times; we quit listening."

He said: "Well, do you mind telling me why you quit listening?" She said: "Yes, I will tell you why we quit listening; 'I've got two teenage daughters and they are members of the church. They made a profession when they were juniors or primaries.'"

She said: "We were listening to your pastor every morning and he got my daughters upset. They thought they weren't Christians. They thought they were not saved. They started crying at the breakfast table and saying: "Momma we are not saved."

She said: "I took them to the pastor and he told them they were saved and for me to turn that radio off and to not let that man disturb my daughters anymore."

I can't convict anybody of sin. The Holy Spirit was disturbing those young ladies. The Holy Spirit was showing them their need of a true relationship with Jesus Christ.

I will tell you this about any pastor or preacher that will tell a man he's saved; any man that will tell another man he's saved is a lost man himself because my friend; there's no one that knows the human heart but God almighty.

You can't tell a man he's saved. The only person that will tell a lost man that he's a saved man is another lost man.

Oh, the best place to hide from Holy Spirit conviction, from the truth of the Gospel, from the preaching of the grace of God, is in church membership or in the pulpit, a false refuge.

"Oh, I know I'm saved, I'm a church member. I go to Sunday school and I tithe." You sound like that old Pharisee in the temple: *"I thank ye Lord that I'm not like other men. I'm not an adulterer, I'm not an extortioner, I tithe, I fast, and I give alms to the poor and I do this, that, and the other:*

Christ said: *"He went home damned, while there was a publican down there who wouldn't even lift his eyes to heaven but smote on his breast and cried over his sins and said: God have mercy on me the sinner."*

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Oh, Paul didn't talk about experience; he talked about a person. He said: "*I know whom I have believed.*" He didn't say, "*I know when I believed* (and he didn't say I know what I believe)."

He said: "*I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.*" Again he said, "*Who is he that condemneth; it is Christ that died?*"

What is your hope? I should ask, who is your hope? If your hope is in what or your hope is in a church, or your hope is in a law, or your hope is in an experience you are going to hear him say in that day as He says to all those people who lay claim to righteousness through a false hope, "*depart from me I never knew you.*"

But, salvation is free if you will turn loose of that false refuge, if you will just let that experience die a natural death. It's already dead, why don't you bury it?

It never has had any life, it's never given you any peace, it's never given you any joy, it's never given you any assurance; you've just carried it around and lugged it around like a dead body. It's never meant anything to you.

You've got to whip it up and revive it up by some kind of special revival or a special season of revival or special music. I get amazed at these preachers that have to stir people up with music. About half of these programs are stirring people up with this music. When you get them stirred up to a certain pitch then they pass the offering plate.

If you have to stir yourself up with something like that you have a false hope! My hope is Christ. It's not an experience and it's not a feeling, it's a person and He's always the same.

I may be on the mountain top or in the valley but He's always on the throne. He's always the same. My hope is who He is and where He is and it never changes.

I will tell you another reason why men don't come to Christ, what hinders them from coming to Christ:

Fifthly: They are ignorant!

Now, that's an awful charge. I hope you didn't turn me off. But, you know, this is perhaps the most humbling and offensive charge that a man can bring against his fellow man, ignorance of God.

But Paul used it; Paul said: "*My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record; they have a zeal of God but it's not according to knowledge, for they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness will not submit to the righteousness of God, (who is Christ, the goal, the purpose of the gospel) Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.*"

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My friend; you can accuse a man of not having the will to come to Christ and he won't get too mad. You can say that your will is in bondage. He will get upset but he won't get too mad; your will is in bondage.

Then, you can accuse a man of loving the world and in his heart he knows that you are telling the truth; he knows you are telling the truth. You can accuse a man of being wrapped up in religious tradition and he might fuss a little while but he knows that he's wrapped up in religious tradition; he knows that he would rather burn a candle than for his heart to burn in love for Christ.

He knows that he would rather pay somebody to pray for him than to pray himself. He knows that he would rather pay some preacher to study for him than to burn a little midnight oil and study for himself.

He would rather pay somebody to see that he gets to heaven than to seek the Lord himself. So, he doesn't mind too much if you tell him he's wrapped up in religious tradition. He will say: "Well; I suppose you are right."

Or you can tell a man that he's got a false profession, that he's depending on an old experience that stayed old and he won't get too mad, but boy; folks resent being told they are ignorant.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in **John chapter 8**; (read that chapter) He stirred up the Pharisee's and when He told them, He said: "*you neither know me nor my Father.*"

They said: "*God's our Father.*" He said: "*You don't know God; you are of your father the devil, he was a liar from the beginning and so are you and his works you will do. You don't know God.*" Let me tell you friend; "*they took up stones to stone him.*"

But now, was he telling the truth? Our Lord always told the truth. He said: "*You do not know God. You neither know me nor my Father.*" He said, "*No man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.*"

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 2:8 through 10**: "*Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things God's prepared for them that love him. But, he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit for the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God.*"

The mysteries of God and the gospel, "*the natural man receiveth not the things of God; they are foolishness to him,*" that's what Paul said himself. The cross is foolishness, the blood is foolishness, and the new birth is foolishness to the carnal mind. "*The preaching of the cross is to them who are perishing, foolishness, (ignorance).*"

The Eunuch was riding along in that chariot and Phillip walked along beside him and listened to him read **Isaiah Chapter 53** and Phillip said: "*do you understand what you are reading? He said, how can I except somebody show me?*"

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That's why I am on this telecast. I'm not here to raise money or to build a University or put my name on a church; I'm here to tell you about Jesus Christ. I'm here to tell you about the way of life and that is Christ.

I'm here to put some pressure on you and to ask you the question: "*what think ye of Jesus Christ?*" This is a faithful saying; it's true because it is a revelation of God, because it's tested by prophecy, promise and miracle, and it has proven its power many times.

This is a true saying and it claims your attention and it is worthy of all acceptance of Jew and Gentile, male and female, white and black, that Jesus Christ, none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord He is divine.

Jesus, He's a man and He is the Christ. He's the Anointed One who came into this world in our flesh, in our likeness, tested as we are, yet without sin and died on a cross. "*He came to save them that are lost.*"

He came to save sinners not to half save them or make them savable or to help them save themselves but to save them, how, by his death.

To whom do we preach it, sinners, and the chief of sinners? Will you come to Christ? You will have to come yourself; I can't help you but He can. Ask him to redeem you!